A

LETTER

FROM

NEW-ENGLAND,

CONCERNING

The State of Religion there.

EDINBURGH,

Printed in the Year MDCCXLII.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Passages omitted in the following LETTER, are such as belong not to the Subject of the Title, or some few Words that the *Publisher* could not make Sense of, and without which the Sense is complete. The Publication thereof, by one into whose Hands the Copy accidentally came, is reckoned the more suitable, that ye would think the *Author* had been at *Cambuslang*.

The *Author* of this LETTER is Brother to *William Oliphant* Merchant in *Edinburgh*.

EDINBURGH,
Printed in the Year MDCCXLII.

A LETTER, &c.

V. D. B. * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

* * * * * * * * * * * I wrote to Mr. *George Byers*, that, upon the large Character he gave me of *Zinzendorf*, in a Letter he wrote me,—as ſoon as I heard of his Arrival at *Penſilvania*, I wrote to him, but yet never heard that he had received my Letter, nor no Anſwer from him: That he was charged with two Things, that he and his *Moravian* Brethren profeſs; 1*ſt*. Attaining to a ſinleſs Perfection. 2*dly*. Univerſal Redemption. Since, I ſee, in our publick Papers, Mr. *Tennent* offering ſomething to the Preſs, moſt bitterly and bloodily anathematizing them; but it is what every *News-Paper*, theſe two Years paſt, hath been moſtly filled up with, one Party writing againſt another, one ſaying and charging the other as Favourers of *Arminianiſm*, and theſe, in Reply, charging the other as *Antinomians*. Generally theſe, that ſpring up with, or after Mr. *Whitefield*, go under the Name of *New-Light* People, *Antinomians*, or *Quakers*. Their *Diviſions*, among themſelves, give juſt Ground: In ſome of them, they are all the *three*. But to ſhew you I do not live in a Corner, I have travelled many a Mile, purely to be ſatisfied as to ſome Reports, hoping to find ſome poor Soul, that might happily ſee ſo much Beauty in Jeſus Chriſt as their new Husband, (which was the Cry) that their only Deſire might be towards him, as their Lord and *Lawgiver*, renouncing all other Lovers, but without any Succeſs or Satisfaction, further than I had

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requent Opportunities to confeſs him before Men, who hath promiſed ſuch he will confeſs before his Father which is in Heaven.

I heard *Tennent* in his Circuit. He appeared to me like a *Boatſwain* of a Ship, calling the Sailors to *come to Prayers and be damned*; except in the Concluſion of his Harrangue, he appeared like a *Doctor* on a *Stage*, telling how many he had cured, and the various Operations he had performed, in order to *ſell* his Cures where he was. He appeared to me to have miſtaken his Trade, as far as any ever I heard; mightily ſtrained both in Prayer and Preaching he appeared to me; but he could recover himſelf, directing his Face, with a broad Look, round the Meeting, with a Sigh, and ſaying, Not one Tear for my Maſter! (or, for Chriſt) and ſo, after he had gathered Wind, began again. I did not hear of any *fell down*, for that is the Term.

The Beginning of the Converſion, as appears, is, they fall down, and are in deep Diſtreſs for ſome Time. By the beſt Information I have, it is like one in the Fit of the *Falling-Sickneſs*, (in ſeverals *Foaming* at their Mouth, diſtorting their Bodies) but longer; and then they riſe full of Joy. Some of the *Builders* judge the Work not good, if they have the leaſt Motion in their Heart to Evil, or find an Unwillingneſs to obey the Goſpel; and others conclude it good, upon their Deſire or Inclinations; and ſo ſome of theſe Converts told me, aſſerting their Converſion, that they had not been guilty of a Sin for ſome Days; others I hear boaſt of Months; many of them contend for a Spirit of Diſcerning. Upon ſpeaking with one another, or any other, they can tell *whether converted* or not; ſome ſay by looking on their Face they can tell.

I had Occaſion to ſpeak with ſeverals that owned they had lived very immoral Lives, but now they were converted. When I ſpoke of *Scripture-Evi-*

Evidence, they told me of *Dreams*, *Impressions*; some that they saw, with their own Eyes, *that* Light *shine*, *come along*, *enter* in at their *Mouth*, and went into their *Heart*; which they were sure was the Spirit of God, and that they should never fall away. ****** Some told me I was yet in the Gall of Bitterness, and the Bond of Iniquity, and was unconverted, and knew nothing of the Matter, till I had such a Discovery as they had got. They were as sure of Heaven as if they were there; many of them laid aside all Business, saying, This World was not for them, (by which great Confusion is likely to ensue) and ly in their Beds, humming any Rhime comes in their Head, going to Meetings of their own, as they call them, such as are converted. I am told, in some Places, they lay aside all *Bibles*, and so exhort one another by the Spirit, as it moves them. And indeed the *Generality* of them, I converted with, seem to me they would *land there*.

We had an Account, some Weeks ago, of a *Negroe*, who was converted at a Meeting, 30 Miles to the westward of me, who was so *full* of the *Spirit*, that he could not contain himself, so rose up to take his Turn with Mass *John*, which obliged some to take hold of him, and carry him out to an Orchyard, where he boldly *held forth* to a great Meeting that followed him; but some, perceiving something uncommon on his Shoulder, drew near to see what it might be, and it proved *two black Snakes*, which dismissed the Assembly. This we had in our *News-Papers*.

I have neither Time nor Paper to spare to give you the *thousandth* Part of the History. Only of late, I see many of the great *Zealots flatten*, and seem to have got *Balance* for their *Sail*. The Government of *Conecticut*, by the Application of the *Gallies* among the Clergy, have made a Law, that none go out of their own Bounds to preach or exhort, except

cept invited, at Peril of loſing their Maintenance provided in Law; at the Intimation of which, ſeverals went Home.—Mr. *Davenport*—took Boat that Night after, and went Home. Severals are now ſeeing the Danger of encouraging *young Converts* to *go about* and *exhort*, and are now writing againſt it. *Tennent* moſt bloodily is warning, every where, his Correſpondents to ſtop the Current; telling them Error will enſue, if *unlearned* Men *go about* ſo. May be, as ſoon as *theſe Men* have got to the *Height* of their Ambition themſelves, they will be as unwilling others *ſhare* with them, as the *idleſt Dron* in the Country. This Mr. *Davenport* you will ſee him much ſpoke of by Mr. *Whitefield* in his Journals.

V. D. B. You have got more *Charity* for Mr. *Whitefield*, than ever I could ſee Room for. I have read ſeveral of his Sermons, beſide his Journals; and indeed I never could ſee what got him ſo much Admiration. In many of his concluſive Remarks, he appears like one ſaying his Catechiſm, *demonſtratively plain Contradiction to the Spirit of God in the Goſpel.*

But being fully weary of this Relation, and I believe have by this Time wearied you; I conclude *with my Opinion*, till I ſee Room for a *better*, *That* Whitefield, *and moſtly his Followers, ſtand too near in the File of thoſe who ſubvert whole Houſes, teaching Things they ought not, for filthy Lucre's Sake. Many* Families *have not*; nor *never* had the *Word of God* in their Houſe, and have now their *Shelfs* filled with his *Epiſtles*, *Journals*, and ſuch as he hath *recommended*, and *great Numbers* never think they need uſe the *Word of God*, if they have ſuch to uſe.

Juſt now I am informed Mr. *Davenport* called at our Clergyman's, as he was going to *Boſton*, and told that he was *conſtrained* by the Spirit, to leave all and come here, expecting a great *Harveſt* of Souls.

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The Clergy of *Boſton* hearing of his coming, met together, and ſent two of their Number to invite him to their Meeting, which he did accept of. After ſeveral *Queries* to him, how he came to *leave* his own Church, and *ſtroll* about ſo, he plumply told them, that they were *unconverted*. They drew up a Memorial of their Procedure, their *Queries* and his Anſwers, and their *Opinion* of him, and reſolved to allow him *no Opportunity* to preach in their Pulpits; fourteen of them ſigned this, and prints it; ſo that, poor Man, he got hard Treatment. I hear that this Appearance of the *Clergy* has ſo encouraged the *raſcally Party*, that they abuſe him, throwing Eggs and Dirt at him and his Diſciples. Whatever Way they are employed within Doors, no ſooner he comes out, than he leans on two's Shoulders, and from the Door, thro' the Street and Field, they *go ſinging*. * * * * * * * * * * * * *

—ſtruck out with Mr. *Whitefield* and his Party, which gave him Opportunity to go *much abroad*, and in ſome Places where *Numbers fell down*; which ſo *charmed* him, that he came home and *thundred* his People, becauſe they were not like other Places, that now they are very much *diſturbed* by him, and plainly ſay he is *crazed*. * * * * * * * * * In no Place ever I was, there ſeems to be more Need to make known the Truths of the Goſpel, than in this Land, ſo far as I have travelled, or can hear; and by many (there is) a very fair Hearing. * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *I am Your's*, &c.

Sic ſubſcribitur AND. OLIPHANT.

Dedham, *July* 12. 1742.
To Mr. *James Cant* Miniſter
of the Goſpel at *Perth*.